

## **5.2 LANDFORM ALTERATION AND AESTHETICS**

### **5.2.1 Introduction and Methodology**

Landform alteration and aesthetics issues were analyzed as part of FSEIR #01-01 for the entire EastLake development. FSEIR #01-01 concluded that the proposed Woods and Vistas communities would alter existing landforms and the visual characteristics of the site through grading, excavation of the ridge tops, and in-filling of canyons. Open expanses of rolling hills used for agricultural purposes would be developed with residential and commercial areas separated by open space. Development would therefore, affect views from surrounding areas and result in significant impacts to visual quality. FSEIR #01-01 did not evaluate the site-specific aesthetic impacts of each of the components of the EastLake III project, such as the proposed project site.

This section identifies the existing landform and aesthetic characteristics of the project area, the potential impacts to any visual resources within the project area and potential mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to less than significant. The visual analysis is based on visual simulations and development cross sections of the proposed project site from key vantage points.

### **5.2.2 Existing Conditions**

The project is located in the eastern limits of the City of Chula Vista, within the master planned community of EastLake Vistas, adjacent to Lower Otay Reservoir. Therefore, the project is located within the eastern boundary of the City of Chula Vista. General landform characteristics of this area consist of rolling foothills of the Peninsular Range Province and broken mesas. The aesthetic features surrounding the project site includes these rolling hills and the Lower Otay Reservoir immediately to the east. Other features within the project vicinity include Mother Miguel Mountain in the northwest, Upper Otay Reservoir and San Miguel Mountain located to the north, the Jamul Mountains in the northeast, San Ysidro Mountains in the southeast, and the Otay River Valley to the south.

Existing surrounding land uses consist of Olympic Parkway, vacant land and residential uses to the north; Wueste Road, open space and Lower Otay Reservoir to the east; the Olympic Training Center and open space to the south; and the Olympic Training Center to the west.

### Viewer Groups

Sensitive viewpoints generally include surrounding residences, recreational areas, and scenic designated roads. The following descriptions identify surrounding sensitive viewers within the study area. Viewer responses to visual changes were inferred from a variety of factors including view exposures, type of viewer, number of viewers, duration of view, and viewer activities. Viewer exposure includes distance and viewing angle.

#### Stationary Viewers

Visually sensitive receptors within the study area include both residential and recreational uses. The locations of these sensitive viewer groups are described below.

#### Residential Uses

A residential community is located to the north and northwest of the project site. This residential community is still under construction; however the residential units closest to the project site have been completed and are currently occupied by residents.

In addition, residential uses are located within the Olympic Training Center, which is located immediately to the west and south of the proposed project site. The residential units within this facility are located in the center of the training facility.

#### Recreational Uses

***Olympic Training Center.*** The Olympic Training Center (OTC) is a 150-acre facility, which houses approximately 4,000 US Olympic athletes per year. Olympic sports such as archery, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, soccer, softball, field hockey, tennis, track and field, and cycling are supported at this complex. Facilities here include a permanent archery range, an artificial all-weather field hockey surface, four soccer fields, a 15,000-square-foot canoe/kayak and rowing boat house, four tennis courts, a 400-meter track and a cycling criterion course. Views of the project site are visible from various locations within the Olympic Training Center, specifically the track and field complex, areas of the parking lot and trails that traverse the training facility.

***Lower Otay Reservoir.*** Lower Otay Lake Reservoir is located approximately 600 feet east of the proposed project site within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego. Lower Otay Reservoir consists of approximately 1,100 surface acres with a minimum depth of about 137.5 feet and 25 miles of shoreline. Recreational activities at the reservoir include fishing and boating. Trails are

located along the reservoir shoreline; however, they are not official trails that are maintained for recreational purposes.

### Mobile Viewers

Mobile viewers are observers on an official road/highway or recreational/hiking trail with views to the project site. Currently there are existing roadways in and around the proposed development and several unmaintained trails and walking paths in the project vicinity.

The duration of view for a person traveling along Olympic Parkway would be approximately 10 seconds for a vehicle traveling east to west, assuming that the vehicle was not stopped at the Olympic Parkway/Wueste Road stop light. The proposed project fronts Olympic Parkway for approximately 540 feet along its northern boundary. The project would be visible for a shorter period of time (approximately 5 seconds) for a vehicle traveling west to east due to Olympic Parkway sloping downhill below the grade of the proposed development. The duration of view from Wueste Road would be approximately 15 to 20 seconds for a vehicle traveling south to north, and approximately 10 seconds for a person traveling north to south due to the curvature of Wueste Road and the project being located on a slope rising above the roadway.

### Scenic Highways

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) describes the purpose of designating a highway as scenic to protect and enhance California's natural beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources. Per Caltrans Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated state scenic routes within the project area.

Chula Vista has several designated Scenic Roadways, where views of unique natural features and roadway characteristics, including enhanced landscaping, adjoining natural slopes, or special design features make traveling a pleasant visual experience. The designated roadways include Olympic Parkway and Wueste Road, in the vicinity of the EastLake III Senior Housing project (City of Chula Vista, Land Use and Transportation Element, 2005). The City of Chula Vista General Plan Policy LUT 13.4 provides guidance for projects located adjacent to scenic routes such as the proposed project (see City of Chula Vista General Plan policies under Local Regulations below).

### Trails

There is a recreational trail (part of the Chula Vista Greenbelt System) immediately east and south of the proposed project. Further, trails exist within the area east of Wueste Road upslope

from the Lower Otay Reservoir. The trails near Lower Otay Reservoir are not maintained for recreational purposes.

In addition, a designated pedestrian pathway is located around the residential community to the north. A designated pedestrian walkway also encircles the eastern and southern edges of the project site, more or less following the alignment of Wueste Road. This pedestrian pathway is paved and currently maintained by the EastLake III Homeowners Association.

### **Project Viewshed**

The geographic limits for the visual assessment consist of the viewshed boundary. The viewshed is defined as the surrounding geographic area from which the proposed residential development is likely to be seen, based on topographic and land use patterns. The viewshed for the proposed project was determined in the field and through analysis of aerial and topographic maps.

The viewshed boundary consists of the following distances surrounding the proposed EastLake III Senior Housing Project site: approximately 1,000 feet to the north, 5,500 feet (1 mile) to the east, 1,300 feet to the south, and 800 feet to the west. Views to the project site from a distance greater than one mile are generally blocked or are limited by existing terrain, elevations, viewing angles, and landforms or development.

### **Key Views**

Available views to a site are affected by distance, viewing angle and the number and type of visual obstacles, both natural and man-made. Views can be from stationary sources, such as homes or businesses, or from mobile sources, predominately from vehicles. The visibility of an object or area mainly depends on the distance from the viewer. The further the object or area is from the viewer the less distinct the object/area becomes, and there is a greater possibility of intervening objects blocking some or all of the view of that particular site.

Key views in the project area are from existing roadways such as Olympic Parkway and Wueste Road, nearby residents and recreationalists utilizing the water or trails associated with Lower Otay Reservoir. The existing and proposed views from these four viewpoints are shown in *Figures 5.2-1 through 5.2-4*. Key View 1 is located from the eastern side of Lower Otay Reservoir approximately 0.7 mile from the project site. The view location is along Otay Lakes Road, looking west (*Figure 5.2-1, Key Viewpoint 1: Existing Conditions – View from the East*). *Figure 5.2-1* shows that the proposed project site is visible from the Lower Otay Reservoir Recreational Area. Key View 2 is located from the north of the project site along Otay Lakes Road looking south (*Figure 5.2-2, Key Viewpoint 2: Existing Conditions – View from the*

Figure 5.2-1 Key Viewpoint 1: View from the East

**Figure 5.2-2 Key Viewpoint 2: View from the North**

**Figure 5.2-3 Key Viewpoint 3: View from the south**

**Figure 5.2-4 Key Viewpoint 4 – View from the West**



*North*). The current view consists of a manmade manufactured slope. Key View 3 is located from the south along Wueste Road looking north (*Figure 5.2-3, Key Viewpoint 3: View from the South*). This view shows vacant land which slopes up from the road with a small portion of mountain foothills in the northern and eastern background. Key View 4 is located from the northwest along Olympic Parkway looking east (*Figure 5.2-4, Key Viewpoint 4: Existing Conditions – View from the West*). Easterly views from Olympic Parkway to the project site consist of an unvegetated manufactured slope and a vacant lot, with a distant view of rolling foothills. The previously proposed Commercial-Tourist use would have included a hotel. The hotel would have been up to 40 feet in height.

### Regulatory Setting

#### State Regulations

The State of California has established a Scenic Highway program which was enacted in 1963 to protect and enhance California's natural beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources.

#### Local Regulations

Counties and cities maintain General Plans, many of which have established policies or goals to preserve aesthetics and scenic resources within their community. In addition, these plans may contain guidelines and policies to preserve open space, scenic vistas, and scenic highway programs.

#### City of Chula Vista General Plan

The existing City of Chula Vista General Plan Land Use and Transportation Element identifies several policies and guidelines in order to minimize impacts to aesthetic resources.

***Land Use and Transportation Element.*** The Land Use and Transportation Element establishes plans and policies to identify the general distribution of housing, businesses, industry, open space (including parks), education facilities and public buildings. In addition, policies and standards for the system of roadways, transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities are established. Relevant land use and transportation objectives and policies (in bullets) related to aesthetics include the following:

Objective LUT 6 – Ensure adjacent land uses are compatible with one another.

- LUT 6.1 – Ensure through adherence with design guidelines and zoning standards that the design review process guarantees excellence in design, and that new construction and alterations to existing buildings are compatible with the best character elements of the area.
- LUT 6.2 – Require that proposed development plans and projects consider and minimize project impacts upon surrounding neighbors.
- LUT 6.3 – Require that the design of new residential, commercial or public development is sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods through consideration of access, compatible building massing, and building height transitions, while maintaining the goals and values set forth in the General Plan.
- LUT 6.7 – Require that outdoor storage areas or salvage yards be screened from any public right-of-way.
- LUT 6.9 – Coordinate with adjacent landowners, cities, and the County of San Diego in establishing compatible land uses for areas adjacent to the City's boundaries.

Objective LUT 7 – Appropriate transitions should be provided between land uses.

- LUT 7.1 – Protect adjacent stable residential neighborhoods by establishing guidelines that reduce the potential impacts of higher intensity mixed use, commercial, and urban residential developments (i.e., transitional areas).
- LUT 7.2 - Require new or expanded uses to provide mitigation or buffers between existing uses where significant adverse impacts could occur.
- LUT 7.4 – Require landscape and/or open space buffers to maintain a naturalized or softer edge for proposed private development directly adjacent to natural and public open space areas.

Objective LUT 8 – Strengthen and sustain Chula Vista's image as a unique place by maintaining, enhancing and creating physical features that distinguish Chula Vista's neighborhoods, communities, and public spaces, and enhances its image as a pedestrian-oriented and livable community.

- LUT 8.4 – Encourage and require where feasible, the incorporation of publicly accessible urban open spaces, including parks, courtyards, water features, gardens, passageways, paseos, and plazas, into public improvements and private projects.

Objective LUT 13 – Preserve scenic resources in Chula Vista, maintain the City’s open space network and promote beautification of the City.

- LUT 13.4 – Any discretionary projects proposed adjacent to scenic routes, with the exception of individual single-family dwellings, shall be subject to design review to ensure that the design of the development proposal will enhance the scenic quality of the route. Review should include site design, architectural design, height, landscaping, signage and utilities. Development adjacent to designated scenic routes should be designed to:
  - Create substantial open areas adjacent to scenic routes through clustering development;
  - Create a pleasing streetscape through landscaping and varied building setbacks; and
  - Coordinate signage, graphics and/or signage requirements, and standards.

### 5.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

The following significance criteria included in Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines will determine the significance of an aesthetic impact.

Would the project:

- 1) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- 2) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- 3) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- 4) Creates a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

### 5.2.4 Environmental Impacts

Evaluation of project impacts with regard to aesthetics is related to the potential change in views of the site from areas surrounding the project site and change in landform. The project site is flat and completely disturbed by previous grading operations. The proposed project would require cut and fill grading for development, which would modify the existing elevations on site. The proposed project site is located within an area that is currently in the process of becoming urbanized.

### **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

No officially designated scenic vistas are located within the project area, therefore impacts to sensitive scenic vista receptors as a result of the proposed project would not occur.

***Optional Construction Road.*** No officially designated scenic vistas are located within the project area, therefore impacts to sensitive scenic vista receptors as a result of this optional project feature would not occur.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail.*** No officially designated scenic vistas are located within the project area, therefore impacts to sensitive scenic vista receptors as a result of this optional project feature would not occur.

### **Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**

Although the project is not visible from a state scenic highway designated per the Caltrans Scenic Highway Mapping System, the project site is visible from two roadways designated as “scenic” in the City of Chula Vista’s General Plan. Wueste Road is located to the east of the proposed project; scenic views associated with this road are largely located to the east of the road. Further, the proposed project site has been previously planned for development per the EastLake III GDP and SPA plans. The proposed project is simply modifying the originally intended land use from a commercial center to that of a multi-family residential complex. The massing and set-back nature of the proposed buildings will help the building meld into the topography of the Lower Otay Reservoir area. Therefore, significant impacts to this scenic roadway would not occur.

View obstruction would occur for approximately 10 seconds for drivers along Olympic Parkway. Additionally, the roadway slopes down, and vehicle speeds are fairly high (45 mph) adjacent to the project site, therefore views of the proposed development would be blocked by the slope up to the development. The view from Olympic Parkway would be changed from a currently graded pad to the south of Olympic Parkway to a high-density residential development located on top of the pad. As previously planned for the intended commercial center, views of the Lower Otay Reservoir would be partially blocked by the proposed project site. Now that the proposed project would entail a multi-family residential complex, view blockage of the Lower Otay Reservoir from Olympic Parkway would still occur. Due to the stepped nature of the proposed buildings, the proposed vegetation plan which is intended to utilize vegetation similar

to that in place on the project site's eastern manufactured slopes, and the relatively high speed of motorists in this area, impacts would be less than significant.

*Table 5.2-1, Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies*, has been prepared to summarize impacts to visual resource protection policies. As discussed in *Table 5.2-1*, the project would not conflict with General Plan policies related to scenic roadways (see discussion of LUT 13.4 in *Table 5.2-1*), therefore a less than significant impact would occur.

**Optional Construction Road:** The proposed temporary construction road would be visible from Wueste Road motorists but would not be visible from Olympic Parkway. As indicated above, the scenic nature of Wueste Road is related to the undeveloped landscapes to the east of the road. Further, once the construction phase of the project has been completed, restoration of the topography and vegetation of the original slope would occur. Because this construction roadway would be located to the west and be temporary in nature, impacts would be less than significant.

**Optional Pedestrian Trail:** The proposed pedestrian trail linking the project site to the OTC would be visible from Wueste Road motorists but would not be visible from Olympic Parkway. As indicated above, the scenic resources associated with the Wueste Road scenic designation are located to the east of the road rather than the developed landscape to the west (including the proposed landscape). Further, due to the distance and elevation of this facility from Wueste Road viewers, the contoured nature of the trail to mirror the existing hillside topography and the fact that trails currently exist within the project area, visual impacts would be less than significant.

### **Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

Analysis of the proposed project's impact on existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area is divided into a discussion of impacts at each key viewpoint as well as an analysis of General Plan policies which seek to protect sensitive receptors from adverse visual impacts. Anticipated changes to Viewpoints 1 through 4 are discussed below. *Table 5.2-1, Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies*, is included below to describe the project's consistency/inconsistency with each General Plan policy related to visual resource protection.

#### **Viewpoint 1**

Viewpoint 1 is located approximately 0.7 mile east of the project site and has mid to distant views of the eastern edge of EastLake III, including the proposed project site. The visual simulation of Viewpoint 1 is depicted in *Figure 5.2-5, Key Viewpoint1: Visual Simulation – View*

*Figure 5.2-5, Key Viewpoint1: Visual Simulation – View from the East*

**TABLE 5.2-1**  
**Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TEXT	CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS
<b>Land Use and Transportation Element</b>		
LUT 6.1	Ensure through adherence with design guidelines and zoning standards that the design review process guarantees excellence in design, and that new construction and alterations to existing buildings are compatible with the best character elements of the area.	The proposed change in land use (from Commercial-Tourist to High Density Residential) would not substantially change the ultimate visual character of the site. Both uses (which are outlined in the SPA Plan) would allow for multi-story buildings, landscaping, grading, lighting, etc. The proposed residential use would be designed to minimize massing through multi-level structures, varied building facades, balconies, tower features, rotated structures, etc. As such, the change in land use would not impact the ultimate visual experience of neighboring residents. Further, the project will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee to ensure that design guidelines and zoning standards are met, therefore the project would be consistent with this policy.
LUT 6.2	Require that proposed development plans and projects consider and minimize project impacts upon surrounding neighbors.	Sections 5.1 ( <i>Land Use and Planning</i> ), 5.5 ( <i>Traffic and Circulation</i> ), 5.6 ( <i>Air Quality</i> ), 5.7 ( <i>Noise</i> ) and 5.9 ( <i>Biological Resources</i> ) of this EIR address potential impacts to significant natural and environmental resources which may affect surrounding neighbors. Visual quality and aesthetic concerns (described in this section) may also impact surrounding neighbors. As discussed on page 5.2-25 and illustrated with <i>Figure 5.2-9, Development Sections</i> , proposed buildings would be designed to minimize massing through multi-level structures, varied building facades, balconies, tower features, rotated buildings, etc. to help the development blend in with surrounding land uses from both a character and architectural perspective. The one story recreational facility would be furthest east on the site, and the site and building elevations would increase from east to west. This would maximize open spaces, and eliminate the appearance of a single structure from Lower Otay Reservoir. With the implementation of mitigation measures discussed in these sections, impacts on surrounding neighborhoods would be less than significant.
LUT 6.3	Require that the design of new residential, commercial or public development is sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods through consideration of access, compatible building massing, and building height transitions, while maintaining the goals and values set forth in the General Plan.	The project proposes to construct a multi-unit senior housing facility that would be located across Olympic Parkway from the EastLake Vistas single-family neighborhood and commercial development area. The proposed project would be of Andalusian architecture (southern Spain) which would be compatible with the surrounding community. Each elevation would have a different appearance and contain numerous architectural

**TABLE 5.2-1**  
**Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TEXT	CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS
		projections and treatments to break up the massing of the buildings. The proposed buildings will be multi-level and will be stepped back from the reservoir to the east and residential/commercial development to the south. Additionally, an open-space buffer along the eastern side of the property and Wueste Road would remain. The site grading will result in a terracing effect on the site thereby allowing the proposed development to meld into the topography. Development of the site therefore would not conflict with intended OTC buffering and preservation of aesthetic qualities currently afforded to Wueste Road motorists/cyclists. In summary, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
LUT 6.7	Require that outdoor storage areas or salvage yards be screened from any public right-of-way.	The on-site trash enclosure will be screened from view of public rights-of-way, therefore the project would be consistent with this policy.
LUT 6.9	Coordinate with adjacent landowners, cities, and the County of San Diego in establishing compatible land uses for areas adjacent to the City's boundaries.	The project is located adjacent to the City of San Diego Lower Otay Reservoir and the OTC. The site is currently graded to divert runoff to the existing storm drain system and away from the reservoir with the exception of south and east facing slopes (not a part of this project). Runoff from the site will continue to be controlled and diverted away from the reservoir to avoid impacts to this resource. Offsite slopes adjacent to the site are landscaped, irrigated with potable water and are not treated with fertilizers or pesticides to minimize impacts to water quality of runoff. The land to the east of the site (surrounding the Lower Otay Reservoir) is part of the City of San Diego's MSCP Preserve; the project would incorporate adjacency measures to avoid indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources. The OTC is located east and adjacent to the project. The project would primarily be adjacent to the OTC parking lot, and would not affect views from the OTC to the reservoir. The neighboring use to the north is Olympic Parkway and a commercial site. North of the commercial site are residential units. As discussed in the land use and visual section. The proposed senior housing project would be a compatible use with these nearby uses. Views of the majority of project from the closest residential units would be obstructed by the future commercial development. Due to the project's architecture, variety of models, rotation of buildings on the site, etc, views of the site from areas to the north would not result in a negative impact. The project is consistent with this policy.



**TABLE 5.2-1**  
**Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TEXT	CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS
LUT 7.1	Protect adjacent stable residential neighborhoods by establishing guidelines that reduce the potential impacts of higher intensity mixed use, commercial, and urban residential developments (i.e., transitional areas).	The proposed project is a high density residential development, not a mixed use or commercial development. The project site would not be considered a transitional project area, but rather an in-fill area that has always been planned for intense development. The proposed project does not include any mixed-use or commercial components that could potentially impact the surrounding single-family residential and OTC uses. The project is consistent with this policy.
LUT 7.2	Require new or expanded uses to provide mitigation or buffers between existing uses where significant adverse impacts could occur.	The project site has always been planned for development. The proposed EastLake Senior Housing Project is located on the west side of Wueste Road which acts as a buffer between the proposed development and the Lower Otay Reservoir. Thus, the proposed project will not be developed at the shoreline, and the public will continue to have access to Lower Otay Reservoir. The project is consistent with this policy.
LUT 7.4	Require landscape and/or open space buffers to maintain a naturalized or softer edge for proposed private development directly adjacent to natural and public open space areas.	The existing open-space buffer along the eastern and southern sides of the property bordering Wueste Road would not be impacted by the proposed project, with the exception of the optional temporary access road, should that be implemented. However, the access road would be regraded and revegetated after construction, therefore the impact to this area would be temporary. The site grading will result in a terracing effect on the site thereby allowing the proposed development to meld into the topography. Furthermore, the existing landscaping buffer and elevation change present between this site and the OTC will remain. Development of the site therefore would not conflict with this policy.
LUT 8.4	Encourage and require where feasible, the incorporation of publicly accessible urban open spaces, including parks, courtyards, water features, gardens, passageways, paseos, and plazas, into public improvements and private projects.	The proposed project would not provide publicly accessible open spaces or recreational areas. However, public open space and trails adjacent to the site would not be impacted by the proposed project. Onsite passive green space and recreational areas will be provided as part of the project and will be owned and maintained by a homeowners association for the benefit of residents. The project would however be required to contribute a fair share to public park development. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.

**TABLE 5.2-1**  
**Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TEXT	CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS
LUT 11.1	Promote development that creates and enhances positive spatial attributes of major public streets, open spaces, cityscape, mountain and bay site lines, and important gateways into the City.	As with the previously planned Commercial-Tourist facility, the proposed project will not directly enhance a major public street, cityscape, bay site lines or important gateways to the City, but would enhance the project site by constructing aesthetically pleasing buildings with a planned theme on an existing graded flat pad. The proposed project would not significantly diminish views of distant mountains. The proposed project would not conflict with this policy.
LUT 11.2	Promote and place a high priority on quality architecture, landscape, and site design to enhance the image of Chula Vista, and create a vital and attractive environment for businesses, residents and visitors.	The proposed change in land use (from Commercial-Tourist to High Density Residential) would not substantially change the ultimate visual character of the site. The SPA Plan would allow for multi-story buildings, landscaping, grading, lighting, etc. The proposed project would be of Andalusian architecture (southern Spain) which would be compatible with the surrounding community. Each elevation would have a different appearance and contain numerous architectural projections and treatments to break up the massing of the buildings. The proposed residential use would be designed to minimize massing through multi-level structures, varied building facades, balconies, tower features, rotated buildings and a variety of landscape, color and building material treatments throughout the site. As such, the change in land use would not impact the ultimate visual experience of neighboring residents. The project will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee to ensure that a vital and attractive environment for nearby businesses and residents and visitors is provided at the site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
LUT 11.3	The City shall, through the development of regulations and guidelines, ensure that good project landscape and site design creates places that are well planned, attractive, efficient, safe and pedestrian-friendly.	The project site would include the landscaping of existing slopes to improve the visual appearance of existing conditions. The project would also provide landscaping throughout the project site to provide visual relief to the building facades. The site will be stepped back (westward) from the reservoir to reduce massing as well as southward from Olympic Parkway. The proposed project would be of Andalusian architecture (southern Spain) which would be compatible with the surrounding community. Each elevation would have a different appearance and contain numerous architectural projections and treatments to break up the massing of the buildings. Finally, considerable open space areas will be provided onsite which will provide for safe, pedestrian friendly activity throughout the senior housing community. The project would therefore be consistent with this policy.

**TABLE 5.2-1**  
**Analysis of General Plan Visual Resource Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TEXT	CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS
LUT 11.4	Actively promote architectural and design excellence in buildings, open space, and urban design.	The project will incorporate an Andalusian (southern Spain) architectural style which would be consistent with the surrounding architectural style of the EastLake community. The project will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee to ensure that the City's high standard for architectural features is upheld. As described in previous policy consistency statements, several architectural features including recessed balconies, varied building facades, tower structures, rotated structures, etc. have been incorporated to result in an interesting visual appearance of seniors community. Finally, urban design elements including pedestrian pathways, benches, meeting spaces and varied landscape
LUT 11.5	Require a design review process for all public and private discretionary projects (which includes architectural, site plan, landscape and signage design) to review and evaluate projects prior to issuance of building permits to determine their compliance with the objectives and specific requirements of the City's Design Manual, General Plan, and appropriate zone or Area Development Plans	The project will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee. The proposed project will include a GDP/SPA Amendment, which would change the existing land use designation from Commercial-Tourist to Residential-High. With the proposed amendments as well as the design review processes required for this project, the proposed project would be consistent with the City's policy of subjecting all public and private discretionary actions to thorough design review.
LUT 13.4	Any discretionary projects proposed adjacent to scenic routes, with the exception of individual single-family dwellings, shall be subject to design review to ensure that the design of the development proposal will enhance the scenic quality of the route. Review should include site design, architectural design, height, landscaping, signage and utilities. Development adjacent to designated scenic routes should be designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create substantial open areas adjacent to scenic routes through clustering development;</li> <li>• Create a pleasing streetscape through landscaping and varied building setbacks; and</li> <li>• Coordinate signage, graphics and/or signage requirements, and standards.</li> </ul>	The proposed project site has been previously planned to support a Commercial-Tourist land use. The proposed project is simply modifying the type of development previously planned on this site and would not substantially change the ultimate visual character of the site. Both uses would allow for multi-story buildings, landscaping, grading, lighting, etc. The proposed residential use would be designed to minimize massing through multi-level structures, varied building facades, balconies, tower features, etc. Landscape treatments would be adjacent to the project boundaries which about the Olympic Parkway and Wueste Road view corridors and would help reduce building massing and foster visual harmony with surrounding residential development typical along these scenic routes. The one story recreational facility would be furthest east on the site, and the site and building elevations would increase from east to west. This would maximize open spaces, and eliminate the appearance of a single structure from Olympic Parkway and Wueste Road. As such, the change in land use would not impact the ultimate visual experience of motorists on Wueste Road or Olympic Parkway. The project's landscape plans and site development plans have and will continue to be reviewed by the Design Review Committee to ensure that massing and set-backs are appropriate for viewers of Olympic Parkway and Wueste Road as was previously envisioned by the EastLake III GDP and SPA.

*from the East*, and shows that the proposed project site is visible from the Lower Otay Reservoir Recreational Area. The proposed multi-family residential complex as well as proposed landscaping treatments are clearly visible from the eastern shore of Lower Otay Reservoir in the mid and distant ground views. This view would also be visible to those utilizing the reservoir and/or trails for recreational purposes. Although the proposed site would be visible from this area, due to the presence of similar residential development in the vicinity of the project site and the distance from this viewpoint, impacts would be less than significant.

***Optional Construction Road:*** The optional construction access road would not be a prominent feature from the eastern shore of Lower Otay Reservoir (Viewpoint 1) (see *Figure 5.2-5*). Further, due to the temporary nature of this optional project feature, impacts to viewers on the eastern shore of Lower Otay Reservoir would be less than significant.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail:*** The optional pedestrian trail would not be a prominent feature from the eastern shore of Lower Otay Reservoir (Viewpoint 1) (see *Figure 5.2-5*). Further, due to the distance and elevation of this facility from viewers on the eastern shore of Lower Otay Reservoir, the contoured nature of the trail to mirror the existing hillside topography and the fact that trails currently exist within the project area, visual impacts would be less than significant.

### Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint 2 is located 0.75 mile north of the proposed project site along Olympic Parkway. This viewpoint is afforded to a small number of residences on the southeast corner of the Eastlake III Residential Development (to the north of the project site). The current view consists of a manmade manufactured slope. The existing site blocks views of the mountains from this vantage point. Although this project site was previously planned for development with a Commercial-Tourist land use, the following discussion describes the specific view viewer groups are likely to have once the project is constructed. *Figure 5.2-6, Key Viewpoint 2: Visual Simulation – View from the North*, depicts a representation of how the proposed project would augment views from this viewpoint. The proposed view would consist of the project's landscaping and several residential buildings. The proposed view will include ample vegetation covering the manmade embankment and blending in with the existing low lying vegetation. Palm trees and other varieties of vegetation will screen the senior housing project from the residential development. The proposed view depicted in *Figure 5.2-6* shows architectural features on the buildings such as balconies, windows and towers. In addition, architectural treatments have been incorporated into the project to help blend the development into its surroundings. The proposed project would be designed with a Spanish Andalusian theme, and will be arranged in a series of 13 separate courtyard style podium buildings. Each individual podium building steps from 3 to 4 stories, creating elevation articulation. Deeply recessed

*Figure 5.2-6, Key Viewpoint 2: Visual Simulation – View from the North*

balconies, attached roofs, canopies, trellises and courtyards reinforce the village character of the project. The site plan design incorporated placement and rotation of buildings to maximize open space and minimize the visual affect of building mass. As indicated in *Figure 5.2-6*, views of the distant rolling hill afforded to this viewer group would remain unchanged as a result of the proposed project's stepped-back nature. In summary, due to the architectural and landscape features that hide the stark unvegetated manufactured slope currently present to these viewers in addition to the stepped back nature of the buildings which preserves distant hillside views, impacts to viewers at Viewpoint 2 would be less than significant.

***Optional Construction Road:*** Viewers from Viewpoint 2 can not see the southern slope of the existing project building pad, therefore this temporary project feature would not be visible from Viewpoint 2. Therefore, no impact would occur.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail:*** Viewers from Viewpoint 2 can not see the southern slope of the existing project building pad and eastern slope of the OTC property, therefore this optional project feature would not be visible from Viewpoint 2. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### Viewpoint 3

Viewpoint 3 represents views present from Wueste Road as well as trail and reservoir users who may be utilizing recreational amenities along the western edge of Lower Otay Reservoir. Although this project site was previously planned for development with a Commercial-Tourist land use, the following discussion describes the specific view viewer groups are likely to have once the project is constructed. The proposed change in view from this key viewpoint is depicted in *Figure 5.2-7, Key Viewpoint 3: Visual Simulation – View from the South*. Views of the project site from this viewpoint would be changed from vacant land which slopes up from the road with a small portion of mountain foothills in the northern and eastern background to a landscaped slope supporting residential units atop. Distant views of the mountains to the north would be partially obstructed although mountain foothills in the background to the northeast would remain visible. The proposed view would consist of the project's landscaping and several residential buildings. The proposed view will include ample vegetation covering the manmade slope which will blend in with the existing low lying vegetation. Palm trees and other varieties of vegetation will help screen the senior housing project from these viewers to the south. The proposed view depicted in *Figure 5.2-7* shows architectural features on the buildings such as balconies, windows and towers. The proposed project would be designed with a Spanish Andalusian theme, and will be arranged in a series of 13 separate courtyard style podium buildings. Each individual podium building steps from 3 to 4 stories, creating elevation articulation. Deeply recessed balconies, attached roofs, canopies, trellises and courtyards

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*Figure 5.2-7, Key Viewpoint 3: Visual Simulation – View from the South.*

reinforce the village character of the project. The site plan design incorporated placement and rotation of buildings to maximize open space and minimize the visual affect of building mass. In addition, architectural treatments have been incorporated into the project to help blend the development into its surroundings. Towers with window accents and multiple balconies break up the linear roof line and massing. As evident in *Figure 5.2-7*, views of the distant rolling hills afforded to this viewer group would remain unchanged as a result of the proposed project's stepped-back nature. In summary, due to the architectural and landscape features that hide the stark unvegetated manufactured slope currently present to these viewers in addition to the stepped back nature of the buildings which preserves distant hillside views, impacts to viewers at Viewpoint 3 would be less than significant.

***Optional Construction Road:*** This optional project feature would be visible from Viewpoint 3 (for both Wueste Road and lake/trail recreationalists). Instead of a graded and partially revegetated slope, a temporary roadway covered with decomposed granite would be visible. Although this road would not be a benefit to the existing landscape afforded Viewpoint 3 viewers, this feature would be temporary in nature and would therefore be less than significant.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail:*** This project feature may be visible to viewers located south of the proposed project site (as represented by Viewpoint 3). However, due to the distance and elevation of this facility from Wueste Road viewers and recreationalists utilizing Lower Otay Reservoir or its adjacent trails, the contoured nature of the trail designed to mirror the existing hillside topography and the fact that trails currently exist within the project area, visual impacts would be less than significant.

### Viewpoint 4

Easterly views from Olympic Parkway to the project site consist of an unvegetated manufactured slope and a vacant lot, with a distant view of rolling foothills (*Figure 5.2-8, Key Viewpoint 4: Visual Simulation – View from the West*). From this vantage point, the four-story residential units would obstruct the majority of the existing views of the rolling foothills to the southeast. Implementation of the proposed project would result in landscaping of the existing unvegetated slope. Landscaping and architectural treatments will be incorporated into project design, therefore there will be no substantial degradation of the existing visual character and quality of the project site and its surroundings.

To further determine potential impacts to sensitive receptors who are currently afforded views of the scenic lake and rolling foothills to the east of the project site, cross sections were prepared that show the proposed project in relation to existing and future development in the project vicinity. The closest residential community to the project site is located across Olympic



*Figure 5.2-8, Key Viewpoint 4: Visual Simulation – View from the West*

Parkway to the north. For the majority of the homes in this existing residential neighborhood, the line of site to Lower Otay Reservoir will eventually be blocked by buildout of the approved Village Commercial development south of these residences (see *Figure 5.2-9, Development Sections*). The proposed EastLake III Senior Housing Project will be located southeast of the future approved Village Commercial development, which upon buildout, will be blocked by the Village Commercial development.

Because the proposed project is a land use change from Commercial-Tourist to High Density Residential, a comparison of buildout of the site under each scenario was conducted (see *Figure 5.2-9, Development Sections*). The existing EastLake III SPA allows a maximum height limit of 45 feet, whereas the proposed SPA amendment would allow a maximum roof height of 50 feet (with the exception of 65-foot architectural features, such as towers and projections to the roofline).

Views from the western edge of the existing residential development north of the proposed project site would result in a change to the existing view. These residents currently have views of the existing graded pad which partially blocks the line of sight to the Lower Otay Reservoir (see *Figure 5.2-9, Development Cross Sections*). There are no intervening structures currently impeding the view of this graded pad. Village Commercial uses are proposed between the existing residential development and the proposed project. As shown in *Figure 5.2-9*, the line of sight from the existing residences to the project pad would be blocked by these Village Commercial uses.

Beyond the proposed Village Commercial development, the upper portions of the proposed buildings may be visible. Whether the site would be constructed with 45-foot Commercial-Tourist buildings or 50-foot multi-family residential buildings with a few 65-foot architectural features, views of the site from the north would already be impeded by the existing graded pad elevation and the future Village Commercial development. In summary, given the lack of scenic vistas from the westernmost residents to the north of the project site, the fact that the project would not be a foreground visual feature, and these residents' sensitivity to building height would decrease with distance, the proposed change in allowable building height from 45 to 50 feet would not result in a significant impact.

Views from the eastern edge of the existing residential land uses located north of the project site have also been analyzed. These residences currently have unimpeded views of the Lower Otay Reservoir. The project site appears in these receptors' westernmost mid-ground view. Development of the project would introduce multi-story buildings to the existing flat graded pad which would impact the westernmost portion of these residents' midground view. Regardless of whether the buildings on the project site are 45 feet in height or 50 feet in height with 65-foot

*Figure 5.2-9, Development Sections*

features, views from this area toward the Lower Otay Reservoir and the hillsides beyond would largely remain unchanged. Therefore, a significant impact would not occur to these visual receptors due to the increase in building height.

In summary, the proposed architectural and landscape treatments of the project in addition to the fact that any scenic views from the residential neighborhoods to the north of the project site (represented by Viewpoint 4) would be blocked regardless of the use, the proposed project would not result in a significant degradation of a scenic vista.

***Optional Construction Road:*** Viewers from Viewpoint 4 can not see the southern slope of the existing project building pad, therefore this temporary project feature would not be visible from Viewpoint 4. Therefore, no impact would occur.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail:*** Viewers from Viewpoint 4 can not see the southern slope of the existing project building pad and eastern slope of the OTC property, therefore this optional project feature would not be visible from Viewpoint 4. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### **Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

The proposed project would introduce a new source of light and glare into the local community. However, this site has previously been planned for development. The difference in night lighting as compared to the Commercial-Tourist use would not be a substantial change. Therefore, there would be no direct impact with regard to substantial light and glare. In order to assure that indirect lighting affects on neighboring uses is minimized, a lighting plan will be required as part of design review. In order to reduce this impact, mitigation is provided.

***Optional Construction Road:*** No lighting would be provided along this proposed temporary construction road; therefore, no impacts from light or glare would result.

***Optional Pedestrian Trail:*** No lighting would be provided along the proposed trail; therefore, no impacts from light or glare would result.

### **5.2.5 Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation**

The project would introduce a new source of light and glare which would be potentially significant.

### 5.2.6 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2-a Prior to approval of the Tentative Parcel map, the applicant shall submit a lighting plan as a part of the Design Review application for the project. The lighting plan shall demonstrate that project lighting is shielded from surrounding properties and that only the minimum amount of lighting required for safety purposes is provided to avoid adverse effects on surrounding areas. In general, lighting fixtures shall be shielded downward and away from adjacent residential land uses, MSCP Preserve areas and Lower Otay Reservoir.

### 5.2.7 Significance of Impacts after Mitigation

Impacts would be mitigated to a level below significant. No residual impacts would occur.